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EN'S MILITARY SERIES.

THE FURTHER TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT OF MOUNTED INFANTRY AND YEOMANRY.

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL H. HALLAM PARR,

C.B., C.M.G.

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BY

MAJOR-GENERAL HENRY HALLAM PARR,

C.B., C.M.G.,

AUTHOR OF "A SKETCH OF THE KAFFIR AND ZULU WARS."

SECOND EDITION.

"Quant à la Troupe amphibie des Dragons, les avis seront éternellement partagés, ... mais en thèse générale, un brave à pied ou à cheval doit battre un poltron."—JOMINI.

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CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION TO 1ST EDITION	7
	INTRODUCTION TO 2ND EDITION	8
I.	—EMPLOYMENT AND DUTIES OF MOUNTED INFANTRY	12
II.	—ORGANIZATION	15
III.	—TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION	22
IV.	—EXERCISES AND MANŒUVRES	34
V.	—SADDLERY AND EQUIPMENT	41
VI.	—EMPLOYMENT OF MACHINE GUNS WITH MOUNTED INFANTRY	48
VII.	—MOUNTED INFANTRY IN AN ADVANCED-GUARD ACTION	55

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THE

FURTHER TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

OF

MOUNTED INFANTRY

AND

YEOMANRY.

INTRODUCTION TO 1ST EDITION.

As more and more attention is being drawn to the subject of Mounted Infantry, the writer trusts there may be some excuse for his attempting to supplement, by the following pages, the official text-book, in which is embodied the system of instruction carried on in an experimental corps under his command in South Africa in 1880-81.

As Mounted Infantry have frequently, in our small expeditions, to be hurriedly organised, these notes may assist officers who find themselves entrusted with such a duty.

Many of the recommendations put forward have been practically tested on service.

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INTRODUCTION TO 2ND EDITION.

The South African War has at last made the Nation take its Army seriously, and we may hope that Reforms long withheld may now be carried out.

The following pages are intended to assist Officers in training Mounted Infantry, an increasingly important portion of our Army. But before turning to his subject, the writer is desirous of pointing out that, however instructive a book on troop-training may be, its virtues are much discounted if there is no space or ground obtainable where such training may be carried out.

Sufficient space to train troops properly is one of the crying needs of the Army. Of this we have had sad and recent experience, and the Nation must hold itself responsible for having obliged brave and devoted troops to perfect themselves in the tactical use of ground on active service, and often under the most deadly and accurate fire of modern times.

No scheme of Army Reform will be complete without a comprehensive manœuvre act, in order to provide natural ground accessible to every armed unit.

Without proper arrangements being made for tactical work on natural ground *it is impossible for our troops to become efficient.*

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The Nation must grasp the fact that the fla parade ground occupies the same position in the education of the soldier, as words of one syllable do in the education of the infant. Whether our officers and men have, in the grouped fire-units of the modern battle-field, to meet the magazine rifle of the European soldier, or, in the closer formation of "shoulder to shoulder," to face the spear of the Asiatic fanatic or the gallant Soudan warrior; to become efficient they require practice on natural ground, and to deny this to them, in these days, is as unfair and as unjust as to keep them armed with a muzzle-loading rifle.

Our tactics—the handling of British troops in war—have again and again of late years and more recently been severely criticised, and sometimes justly, but, when the country deplores the loss of brave men, let those who cast blame on commanders consider how difficult it is for officers in command (who have to take up a position on natural ground in order to make an attack or receive an attacking enemy) to dispose their troops satisfactorily when unused, except at long intervals, to anything but the drill-field. Is it thought drill-field practice alone will aid them much, or enable their subordinates in their turn to intelligently carry out their orders, and take due advantage of the ground to be occupied ?

Some years ago the present writer was attending the French manœuvres, and on one of the days of battle saw the whole of the Artillery of an Army

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Corps (some 90 guns) crash through the ripe vines on a hillside to gain an artillery position.

The damage done in ten minutes must have been very great, yet no one seemed to think it anything out of the common, except, perhaps, the poor old proprietor, who, having witnessed the guns and teams gallop past him working destruction, came up to the writer (then harmlessly threading his way at a walk between two rows of already crushed vines), and with tears in his eyes and voice murmured, "*Ménagez-vous un peu, mon bon 'Mossieu,' voyez donc mes pauvres vignes.*"

Such reckless waste as above depicted is certainly not to be commended, yet does the incident furnish a moral !

The French people, as a whole, feel that their existence as a first-class power—each peasant realises that the safety of his *petit chez soi*—depends upon the Army ; this fact has been rudely enough brought home to them—therefore the Nation demands an efficient Army and counts the cost afterwards.

For us English it is hard to realise there is any danger in the state of inefficiency and unreadiness of our Army, and up to now we have haggled over the Army Estimates, and postponed efficiency. On this particular point (as regards manœuvres) up to the awakening of the Empire in 1899, the mass of Englishmen did not care if the troops in English garrisons did not leave a flat parade ground

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from year's end to year's end ; as, indeed, at some stations they do not.

Each district should have its manœuvre ground —a natural piece of country, over which manœuvre rights have been acquired, to be reached by train, if necessary, so many times a month. Further, every General in command, whether in the United Kingdom or in the Colonies, should be bound to carry out, yearly, so many days' combined manœuvres. By his manœuvre report, his own and his Command's value and state of efficiency should be, to a considerable extent, gauged. Inspections by higher authority should take place when practicable during annual manœuvres, so that a General's troops may be seen as nearly as practicable under the conditions of active service.

The manœuvre schemes must differ according to locality, as, for instance, at Mediterranean stations they now take the form of speedy embarkations or hostile landings.

At any rate, something practical and useful, as preparation for war, must be practised each year.

The money (we should have to spend thousands where we now spend hundreds or tens) would not be the worst spent in the Military Budget.

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CHAPTER I.

EMPLOYMENT AND DUTIES.

Amongst the many lessons the South African War has taught is that of how to rate mobility in troops at its true value.

At the end of 1899 we were watching the most efficient and, as a whole, the best trained Army that ever left British shores paralysed and unable to cope with its enemy, on account of its being so slow moving and so immobile.

We have now learnt what masses of mobile troops can do.

It is hoped we shall apply the lesson.

Before the present war, mounted infantry was, more perhaps in theory than in practice, considered to be a valuable adjunct to a commander's strength; the South African War has shown its value, and in future the mounted infantryman will be considered indispensable, and it will be probably found necessary to train a hundred men where ten men were, before the war, held to be sufficient.

In our smaller campaigns, in the Zulu, Egyptian and Soudan Expeditions, the duties of mounted infantry have mostly been those of scouting, patrolling, etc., thus supplementing the cavalry available to the hand of the general in command.

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While mounted infantry must be trained in such duties, so as to assist the cavalry when required, and so as to be able to take care of itself when acting independently, these are not its functions in European warfare, or in operations on a large scale.

The most important uses of mounted infantry are :—

1. To accompany the cavalry in rapid movements, to seize positions, or to threaten or attack flanks or communications, and to act with cavalry in pursuit.

2. To reinforce rapidly, and at a critical moment, infantry who are overtasked, or who have succeeded in gaining some vantage-ground in the general line of the attack, and who require assistance to make good their footing.

4. To enable the general to disengage his infantry from action.

When mounted infantry is organised on a proper scale, it will be on many occasions practicable to do without any infantry in the advance guard. Such a course would add very much to the mobility and handiness of the advance guard, while the wear and tear spared to the infantry would be considerable.

The advance guard of an army corps with (in addition to the usual amount of cavalry and artillery*) three battalions mounted infantry with machine guns would be able, under ordinary circumstances, to sweep away the enemy in front, or to hold on to a position until reinforcements

* Say nine squadrons and two batteries Horse Artillery.

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arrived; and (being composed of mounted men only) would be better able to disengage itself from an undesirable combat, and to avoid being seriously compromised.

It may sometimes happen that the corps of mounted infantry may be, at the end of a day's march, the freshest troops available for outpost duty. There may have been no fighting, and all the scouting may have been performed by the cavalry, and while the infantry have been on their legs the livelong day, the mounted infantry have had only a pleasant ride with the guns of the advance guard. They would, therefore, be detailed for the most remote outposts (and thus save the infantry a weary trudge); their horses, except a few for orderly duty, would be taken back to bivouac or quarters, by the numbers three, in charge of a proportion of officers and sergeants.

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CHAPTER II.

ORGANIZATION.

The South African War, '99-00, has shown clearly that the modest proportions of Mounted Infantry Organization, which have hitherto been considered sufficient in the British Army, will no longer suffice for the requirements of modern warfare.

A much more generous system is necessary, and it will be probably necessary to experiment in one or more directions.

It seems to the writer that it would be well to see whether one company of each battalion should not be a mounted infantry company.

This should not mean that this company should travel about with horses and saddlery, but it *would* mean that the officers and men of the companies would be selected and trained for mounted work—that breeches, putties, bandoliers, and spurs, in short, personal equipment and clothing, should be in possession of the unit and ready for issue.

At stations where there was ground for mounted troops, the mounted infantry company of a battalion would take over the horses and saddlery of the battalion which they relieved, on arrival at its new quarters.

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Thus Z battalion at Aldershot would be ordered to Natal, its place at Aldershot being taken by X battalion from Dover. Z battalion hands over horses and equipment to X battalion, who mounts its mounted infantry company. Z battalion finds its horses waiting for it in Natal, which it takes over from Y battalion, which dismounts its mounted infantry company on proceeding to Bermuda.

At Aldershot, Salisbury Plain, The Curragh, Shorncliffe, and certain other stations where ground is available for mounted troops, one company of each infantry battalion should be mounted.

The companies should be formed into a corps, with a trained staff for instructional purposes when practicable, and a careful synopsis and course of instruction should be drawn up.

It must be admitted that this proposal would cause serious expenditure for barrack accommodation and stabling, but if the matter is duly weighed, the expenditure, in the writer's opinion, is justified by the experiences of the recent mobilisation, and the efforts to provide a sufficient number of mounted men for the South African War, which resulted in many cases of men who could scarcely climb into the saddle, and horses, many of whom had hardly been backed and handled, embarking in company together for active service as mounted infantry.

This courting of disaster should not occur again.

We have seen that the old saying, that tactics change every ten years, still holds good. This is

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the decade of the Cavalryman, the "Dragoon," and the galloping gun; let us prepare for it.

With regard to a mounted infantry force available for home defence, there are satisfactory signs that the Yeomanry will not much longer resist the change, which has long been desired, of the force into mounted infantry. It is hoped that Yeomanry commanding officers who cling to the idea of Yeomanry Cavalry will endeavour to realise that the question is by no means an academic one, but that the training of cavalry and mounted infantry or mounted riflemen differs at every step. While cavalry is the most difficult arm to train without large expenditure of time on both horses and men, mounted infantry is an arm easily instructed, and admirably adapted to men who are accustomed to horses and have a liking for outdoor pursuits.

Yeomanry cavalry can, at the best, be but very indifferent cavalry. As swordsmen, yeomen cannot command respect, although the force may contain here and there fine "blades"—and the "charge" of partially trained men on partially trained horses must be always wanting in cohesion. Yet while the Yeomanry is cavalry, on both these parts of a cavalryman's training must much precious time be wasted, which, once the yeoman is a mounted infantryman, would be occupied in scouting and shooting.

The picturesque full dress possessed by many Yeomanry corps could, where desired, be retained, although it is a serious tax on the sources of men

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of moderate means; but the men's swords should disappear, and a bayonet or sword-bayonet should be substituted for it, and a yeoman should become a mounted infantryman, or if the name is more acceptable, a mounted rifleman.

The carbine should, I think, be left to the Yeomanry; the carbine is equal to the rifle in shooting, although it is somewhat harder to shoot with, and, on the other hand, it is infinitely more easy to handle mounted, and as the whole corps would be armed with the weapon, there would not be the same objection to yeomen carrying the carbine, as there would to mounted infantry of the line carrying it.

A well organized force of from 12,000 to 15,000 mounted infantry, with a due proportion of machine guns, is what the Nation should aim at for the Yeomanry.

It may now be pointed out that the inspection of the Yeomanry should always remain in the hands of the Inspector-General of Cavalry, so as to ensure a proper standard of mounted and tactical efficiency.

It would be well if the isolated volunteer companies of mounted infantry could be merged, where practicable, into corps of Yeomanry. Small companies of mounted infantry are hard to inspect and difficult to keep up to a fixed standard of efficiency.

The state of Ireland is so different from what it was 20 years ago; may we not hope that it may be

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considered possible to make use of the fine material for mounted men to form corps of yeomen mounted infantry, ready to our hand in Ireland ?

Yeomanry corps should, whenever practicable, train in the neighbourhood to which the corps would be sent on mobilisation, and part of the inspection should be a test of the knowledge of the surrounding country.

The organization of mounted infantry is by companies, sections, and sub-sections. I should like to see this last somewhat meaningless word changed for the word "*Squad*," a well-known word in English military parlance, and less likely to be confused with sections. Moreover, "sub-section" in the infantry has a different meaning.

It is of great importance that the squad or sub-section organisation should be developed and insisted upon.

For each sub-section of four men a sub-section-leader should be chosen. The commandant should, if possible, give the sub-section leaders lance-stripes.

This sub-section organization provides a lance-corporal and three privates for any mounted duty ; and three men, or a lance-corporal and two men, for dismounted duty, with the fourth man in camp or barracks to see to the sub-section's horses.

One of the reasons the horses of the horse and field artillery are so well looked after on service is, that the unit of responsibility is such a small one, the "numbers one" of sub-divisions or guns being

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responsible to the subalterns of sections for the work. Thus there are no horses of absentees, or prisoners, or non-commissioned officers forgotten and overlooked in their watering, feeding, grooming, or what not.

The same argument holds good with the sub-section organization. Any man of a sub-section will do the best he can for his comrades' horses, even if the sub-section-leader, who is directly responsible for the work, is absent.

The sub-section organization should always be adhered to when practicable.

The men composing a sub-section get to understand and trust each other, and acquire an immense deal of confidence and *aplomb* in facing and dealing with difficulties.

Soldiers pick up knowledge, one from another, very readily, and talk together a great deal about what their officers tell and teach them. Train your squad-leaders carefully, and most of what you teach them will filter into their squads.

In Egypt, the sub-section-leaders were armed with a revolver in addition to their rifle; and though an indiscriminate issue of this weapon is to be deprecated with young soldiers, who are likely to "draw" and damage each other more than the enemy, it proved of use on several occasions. The privilege to carry this was much valued, as marking the picked men of the corps.

It is a good plan to let the sub-section-leaders pick their men, subject to the section-commander's

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sanction, and company commander's approval. This makes men more contented and easier to manage.

The squad or sub-section-leader, then, should be held, to a legitimate extent, responsible for the sub-section—held responsible for its behaviour, its horses, its saddlery, etc., being bound to report anything wrong, whether it is one of his horses has lost a shoe, or the absence of one of his men. Thus on parade there should be no calling the roll; the quickest way for proving the section is—

"Leaders, answer for your sub-sections! No. 1?" "Present, sir," etc.*

These are trifles, but they all tend to developing the responsibility of the sub-section-leaders, and enabling the officers and sergeants to work through them at the men—whether in order to make a lazy man "soldier" better, or an unsteady one keep out of trouble.

* No other proving should, by the way, be permitted—such as "flanks of fours," etc. It is cumbrous and a waste of time.

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CHAPTER III.

TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION.

In mounted infantry, exceptional intelligence and nerve are required from the sergeants and rank and file. In order to develop these qualities, officers must make up their minds to take the instruction of their men entirely into their own hands.

Not only is this essential in order that men shall be properly and intelligently taught, but it is also necessary in order to give the officers that touch and hold over their men, only to be acquired by their knowing intimately their capabilities and characters, which knowledge is thus easily and surely attained. Such a course also leads the men to trust and understand their officers, and when in difficulties, to have confidence in the capacity of their officers "to see them through."

The foregoing paragraphs may seem truisms. Who will teach the men, if their officers do not? That some officers will teach the men, goes without saying. What is wanted, however, is that *the* officer who commands the tactical unit teaches the men he is to lead.

As a rule, there should be no Adjutant with mounted infantry; an orderly officer is generally sufficient. The corps sergeant-major should look after the "duties," and keep his eyes open as to the

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conduct and discipline of the sergeants and rank and file; but he should not meddle with the instruction of the men. If a second officer is required to assist the Commandant of the Corps in the training and instruction of the corps, he should be a "Second in command."

If the corps is of sufficient size to demand an Adjutant as well, the Adjutant's work should be confined to the orderly-room, provost duties, and A.D.C.'s work. But the vicious system peculiar to, and for long the bane of the British Army, of a junior officer instructing men who do not belong to his squadron, battery or company, and interfering with the captain's responsibilities, should not be permitted.

Any special instruction necessary to be imparted to officers or men must be carried out either by the officer commanding or the second in command.

In mounted infantry mounted on horses, as a rule no cavalry sergeants should be allowed, useful as they may be in teaching stable management and stable discipline. It is an admission that the officers cannot teach their own non-commissioned officers. It is far preferable to send either officers, and selected sergeants, through a short course with a cavalry regiment—to learn stable discipline and routine, fitting saddlery, etc.—than to admit the employment of cavalry instructors.*

* In some cases, when there are a number of unbacked or young remounts, or queer-tempered horses, the services of one or more rough riders may be required. They should be obtained from the artillery if possible.

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It is often a source of perplexity to cavalry officers and non-commissioned officers (when it falls to their lot to train mounted infantry) to know what to insist upon in the mounted work which they have to teach.

The cavalryman's training, as regards drill, has for its aim the placing of the squadron in line, the cavalry formation of attack—to this, *in the cavalry,* everything must be subordinated. Therefore, sound squadron-leading, correct, accurate intervals and distances, and careful dressing, must be constantly inculcated and insisted upon. Squadron and troop-leaders must be checked if their alignment is not true and accurate. Men must be cautioned to square their horses, and keep their 6-inch intervals from knee to knee.

When, however, we have to train the mounted infantryman, all this must be not only neglected, but *forbidden.* The mounted infantryman should *never* form line unless to dismount.

The more room he takes in the ranks (having due regard to other troops) the better.

The formation of a mounted infantry company, when drilling or at manœuvres, should be generally "section-columns" (*i.e.,* the word of command to a mounted infantry company standing in line would be "Company will advance, sub-sections, right, sections, left—wheel"). The Company Commander should name a "section of direction" near which he will, perhaps, ride. The section-leaders should lead their sections, watching

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the company leader and the "section of direction."

So long as the section-leaders take plenty of room, the Instructor should give them a free hand to get over the ground the best way they can.

A defile (a gate?) may force the company into column of route; the section-leaders must resume their position in column of sections without directions, the Company Commander seeing that, if necessary, the pace of the directing company is moderated.

Words of command should be few and far between, but everything, as far as is practicable, should be done by signal.

Where smartness is required is in the mount and dismount, *especially "the dismount, for dismounted duty."* This should be performed with the same smartness as when "action front" is given to a battery of Artillery. Indeed, I should abolish the present rather cumbrous word of command, and instead of "For dismounted duty, dismount," should make it "*Action front*," "Dismount," "Action, right or left," "Dismount." The words "Front," "Right," "Left," or "Rear," show in which direction the sub-sections are to double out after dismounting. At drill the "dismount for dismounted duty" cannot be practised too often, and from all sorts of formations.

Properly trained mounted infantry can be exceedingly expert in getting on and off their horses, and the horses become, with practice,

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extraordinarily handy, and easy to lead about in sub-sections.

As far as "*drill*" is concerned, it is the following points in which the mounted infantry leader may take a pride in being "smart."

A. The rapidity with which he can get his men from their horses and into the "ready" position, having taken advantage of any cover handy.

B. The satisfactory handling of his led horses, and their being well placed, and if practicable, well concealed.

C. The smoothness and ease (*i.e.*, without fuss and shouting) with which he can move his mounted men about in small columns.

The entire training must be thoroughly practical; therefore no riding instruction as merely riding instruction, no musketry instruction as merely musketry instruction, should be permitted, although the man should be always at work at his horse and his rifle.

The strength of mounted infantry is their strength dismounted, and moved from their horses or their means of conveyance. Every effort must, therefore, be used to decrease the horse-holders and increase the number of rifles.

This cannot be too much insisted on. Nothing can be more discouraging than to see the small number of rifles an apparently strong body of mounted infantry is able to dispose of.

Mounted infantry are, by regulation, supposed to dismount and place in fighting line three-quarters

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of the rank and file (that is, 60 out of a company of 80 rank and file, 450 out of a corps of 600, in the latter case leaving 150 rifles unemployed). Were this proportion, however, never exceeded, mounted infantry would be a very expensive article.

In practice, it is found that horses soon get docile and quiet together, and a very few days' hard work will bring horses to look upon the signal for dismounted duty with satisfaction, and they will remain quietly standing in the ranks, linked or ringed, for hours in charge of one horse-holder per section.*

I am referring here to geldings and mares; stallions are most objectionable, on account of their pugnacious qualities, thus requiring more horse-holders. It is, therefore, a matter of great importance that, when practicable, geldings and mares should always be obtained for mounted infantry. This point is to be judged on different grounds than when considering the comparative merits of stallions and geldings for mounting cavalry.

Few who have commanded mounted infantry in action but have turned with envious eyes to their horse-holders, and devised schemes for getting more of them into the fighting line.

With stallions, more rifles are lost to the front than with geldings; and as a mounted infantryman is useless in action while mounted, and while his work only begins when he dismounts, this is an

* There should be a certain number of hobbles per company, to be carried by men riding restless horses or kickers.

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important point. It becomes a serious matter when four or five fighting stallions in each company necessitate the withdrawal of so many rifles to keep them from spreading disorder and insubordination amongst the company horses.

It must never be forgotten that it is waste of time training men as mounted infantry who cannot shoot; and to keep up men's shooting they must have plenty of practice. The more rounds men expend the better they shoot; and they must keep up their shooting all the year round, irrespective of the annual course, if they are to keep up to a really high standard of "sharp-shooting."

No man should be suffered to join the mounted infantry company of a Battalion who is not a first class shot, or gives fair promise of becoming one.

His company officer must then try to turn him into a finished rifle shot.

Constant work in the Morris tube gallery to teach him to throw his rifle up to his shoulder and catch his sights rapidly, and plenty of work, if possible, away from the ranges *at unknown distances*, at surprise and moving targets, should be given the mounted infantryman in order to bring his shooting up to a proper standard.

Those who have seen a Boer jump off his pony, jerk the rein over the animal's head as a sign that he is not to move, and take a shot at a buck (sometimes if he wants to show off) 500 or 600 yards off *with a Martini without raising his back-*

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sight, will possess in his mind's eye a desirable standard in shooting for our mounted infantry.

Rapid and energetic opening of independent fire must be taught. The fire discipline of British infantry has been such that fault could rarely be found with the men for getting out of hand, but it was often remarked that troops would not open fire smartly enough. Doubtless the South African War will have made a change for the better in this direction.

Care must be taken that, if any proportion of the corps is armed with a pistol or with a revolver, it is thoroughly expert in the use of this arm. The heavy pistol or revolver is, when properly used, a most formidable weapon at close quarters.

There are some American generals who hold still that cavalry armed with the revolver can hold its own against cavalry armed with sword and lance. The cavalry, however, in the American war was very raw and untrained, and the experience of the cavalry engagements gained at this time was very misleading. Be that as it may, no man ought to carry a weapon of which he is not the master; and mounted infantry who can hold their revolvers straight would be able to extricate themselves from an awkward position, where men shooting at random would be helpless.

Although to cavalry falls the responsibility for the safety of a mixed force, yet every soldier should be able to look after his own and his comrades' safety. Moreover, mounted infantry may at any

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moment be called upon to take up, temporarily, cavalry duties and scouting.

Therefore, in each section of mounted infantry there should be one or two squads or sub-sections specially trained in scouting.

Every man must be trained in reporting what he sees; signalling by conventional signs; in short, in the rudiments of scouting. But men who show an aptitude for the work and are specially intelligent, should receive special theoretical and practical instruction in scouting and a scout's duties. A picked officer of the company should take such men in hand, and instruct them indoors and in the field. Colonel Baden-Powell's now well-known book will give ideas for the system of instruction. It is but few men who learn to be clever scouts, and it is well to have available dependable men, who are known to have attained a certain standard of efficiency in the work, to be employed in anxious times or upon difficult jobs.

It has been said above that there should be no riding instruction merely as riding instruction. The best time for improving the men's riding is on the way to the drill or manœuvre ground.

After the corps have moved off, the company-leaders should let their companies pass and repass them, to see how the horses look, and how the men are riding, to show them how to correct their seat, manner of holding their reins, position of their hands, etc. The company-leader should speak to any man who is in difficulties with his horse, and

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in need of advice how to handle him, and find out from him what is the matter, *without necessarily finding fault.* The officer should speak so that the men near can hear him, and can also, if need be, profit by his advice and example.

A five minutes' halt and dismount should be made ten or fifteen minutes after leaving stables. This should *never* be omitted, as it is a great comfort to men and horses. One man has been late turning out, and his accoutrements are not comfortable; another has had to take a different horse, and his leathers do not suit him; some of the horses want to stale, etc.

In a dry climate the weather has not to be taken much into consideration as to outdoor work, but in England this is a serious question, as it is likely to interfere greatly with the work. Rain, unless very heavy and combined with violent wind, must not be permitted to interfere with work. Drill and work in rain, when there are warm barracks to return to, and dry clothes to put on, will do no one any harm. Any officer and man who cannot stand such exposure had better return to his corps. But men should always be permitted to turn out for work in old clothes. It is not the weather men mind; it is destroying their clothes, and the thought that, perhaps owing to the rain and mud, they will get "put down" for a new frock or pants.

This, it may be remarked, is the cause of a considerable amount of discontent in the English

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army; and it should be always recognised in all branches of the service, that for work likely to destroy men's clothing, such as musketry, manœuvres, field-works, etc., patched and worn clothing be permitted. Some phrase in orders detailing the parade, such as "fatigue" or "manœuvre clothing," would indicate what dress was to be worn.

A great deal of petty crime, and of discontent, which perhaps does not get further than the squadron or battery sergeant-majors, or colour-sergeants, would be thereby done away with.

In training mounted infantry, a great deal of work is demanded from the horses. It must be remembered, however, it is *the pace that kills*, and that, even taking into consideration the inferior quality of the horses on which mounted infantry are mounted, the pace is much slower and less damaging than that at which cavalry manœuvre. Also, while the work is proceeding, the horses are often standing dismounted and therefore resting.

The secret is to look carefully after the delicate horses. There are numbers of cheerful, hearty animals, who take the rough with the smooth and give no one a moment's anxiety. But the anxious and nervous horse, the delicate feeder—these are the ones which require the "master's eye."

It is a great point to get such horses cool to stable. A horse's discomfort is great when he has fretted all the way home, having exhausted the patience of his rider, with disagreeable results to

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himself, and when he arrives at stables sweating bodily and worried mentally.

Such horses should be dismounted a certain distance from home and led—horses rarely fret leading; indeed, after manœuvres or quick drill, nothing will so shorten the work, after return to stables, as dismounting the corps and leading the last twenty minutes or half-an-hour of the way home, say for the last mile or mile and a half.

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CHAPTER IV.

EXERCISES AND MANŒUVRES.

All exercises and manœuvres should (it goes without saying) be as practical and as realistic as possible.

While manœuvring, scouts—both for examining the ground and for reconnoitring—should be *always* out, so as to accustom officers *never to be without them*, and to teach men the duties required of them when acting as scouts or flankers to a rapidly moving force.*

As mounted infantry has most to dread from a sudden attack from cavalry, officers and men should be practised in preparing for and meeting sudden cavalry attacks or surprises.

A company should be detailed to simulate cavalry; and as a sign that it should be regarded as such, a few ordinary lance-pennons might be attached to the muzzles of the rifles.

The commandant, or other officer as umpire, should be on the ground to decide whether the cavalry fairly surprised the mounted infantry and could have charged home, or whether the mounted infantry could have had time to have escaped to broken ground, or to repel the attack on foot.

*It may be remarked that the usual fault of our scouts and flankers is, that they remain too near the troops they are working for.

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Mounted infantry caught by cavalry in the saddle, or before it has had time to dismount and to open an effective fire, should, of course, be put out of action.

In practising outpost duty, an enemy should be represented, who should try and break through the line of vedettes.

In practising the Attack, two companies should work against each other—one on the defensive, and one on the offensive.

Again, a company may be sent to march a few miles out from quarters, and, without giving notice, a second company warned unexpectedly to try and surprise the first on its march home.

There is another practice which will be found of considerable use in order to train men to deal with an enemy like the Zulus or Soudanese, who intend coming to close quarters, and develop their attack almost as quickly as mounted men. Direct an enemy to advance, without firing, at a slow trot, or trot and walk, against a company or corps, which should have orders to retire before the enemy, taking care always to keep him under fire. The enemy should not be permitted to be distant over 700 yards or under 200 yards.

The above should also be practised with the enemy retiring.

This practice should be always practised with blank ammunition, and one company should often perform it against another, points being deducted for exceeding the 700 yards, or for letting the

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supposed enemy get within 200 yards, and also for the time when the enemy *was not* under fire.

In practising the Attack, do not hurry over your instructions as to the objects of the Attack, and the manner in which it is to be carried out. It is absolutely necessary that a company-leader should clearly understand, and make clear to each officer, sergeant, and sub-section-leader, at what point in the front he is aiming to reach. This alone will insure intelligent work on the part of his subordinates. (It is to be remembered that on active service your corps may be, or assumed to be, out of fire, or at any rate under fair shelter, before the attack commences.)

Make sure that you, on your side, have given sufficient instructions (although without burdening your officers' memories, and fettering their initiative by too much detail); and that your officers, on their side, understand what is required of them.

Thus will be avoided, in peace time, the mistakes, the galloping about, and the shouting consequent on badly delivered and partially understood instructions; and, in war time, far more serious complications.

If at drill serious mistakes are made, and movements carried out badly, do not send orderlies and messengers all over the ground with vehemently worded messages. Sound the "Halt," and explain the mistakes, and recommence. You will thus learn *why* the mistakes were made—a valuable piece of knowledge; and there is the chance that

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you will discover that they were committed owing to some instruction intended by you to be taken in one way, but received in another.

The Attack should be practised as in the infantry; but the advantage their horses give mounted infantry in getting rapidly over the ground passed over by infantry during the first stage of the Attack (say from 2,000 to 1,000 yards from the enemy's position) should not be forgotten.

Company leaders should practise taking up their companies to the position the horses are to be left at in different methods; for instance, sometimes by taking up a company, in column of sections, or column of route (by serpentining along, according to the folds of the ground, cover may be gained the whole distance). Another time, another formation must be adopted, and the company-leader order the section-leaders to take their companies across to where the horses are to be left, at as fast a gallop as possible, and in extended formation. If no suitable cover to shelter the horses can be found, the horses must be sent back at a gallop. From the point where the dismount (which in this case will be ordered at a greater distance from the enemy's position) takes place, care must be taken that the horses are, if possible, retired *obliquely* to the rear.

The individuality of company-leaders should be brought out as much as possible during the practice of the Attack.

They must understand that all the instruction they can expect from their immediate commander is

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the general purpose and aim of the attack and his own objective (*i.e.*, the object on which he is to direct his men).

For the rest, the company-leaders are responsible. The control of the fire, the way of working that part of the ground allotted to their unit, rests with them.

The behaviour of company and section-leaders should be closely watched at field-firing, to see whether they show resolute initiative in commanding and "handling" the fire of their men.

It should be remembered that with young soldiers, perhaps under fire for the first time, the officer's voice has a most steadying effect.

Many young soldiers are inclined to be unsteady, not because they are afraid, but because their mental balance is rather upset, and their nerves highly strung.

They are most anxious to behave well, and they are very curious to find out how, firstly, they *themselves* will behave; secondly, how their comrades will behave. All this renders the officer's voice, recalling the lessons he has taught them, of great service, making them understand that exactly the same is expected of them in action as on the manœuvre ground.

In taking his fighting line into action, a company-leader must not merely give the distance and nothing more. His glasses should be out, and those of his subalterns, to note the range, and the places where his fire will have most effect; his

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whistle ready to signal to his men to cease fire, whether to correct their range, or, in case they are getting at all flurried or unsteady, to prevent them getting out of hand, or, again, to concentrate his fire, or a portion of it, on certain points in the position his men are attacking.

In moving large bodies of mounted infantry, the movements laid down in Mounted Infantry Regulations will be found sufficient. Company columns should be generally adhered to ; as, for instance, in an advance of a couple of miles to a point where a dismount is to take place and an attack commenced.

The commander of the corps must be near the company of direction. The utmost freedom must be given to company-leaders. All that is wanted is that they do not lose their position to too great an extent, and that they conform to the general direction and formation of the company of direction, and that they take plenty of interval so as never to "jam."

The general principles which govern the movements of cavalry, *before* forming for the attack, are more or less applicable to mounted infantry ; but, as has been said before, the exactitude of distance, interval, and dressing which is required of cavalry so as to enable it to get into line, *its* fighting formation, is not required of mounted infantry, who first of all require to dismount and get away from their means of transport.

If by any chance mounted infantry has to accompany cavalry in an advance in an open country, its

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place will be in rear of the second line on the least-exposed flank.

After tactical exercises the commandant of the corps should accustom the company-leaders to criticise, in his presence, the work done by their companies to their subalterns, and perhaps their sergeants. Such a discussion will give him a good idea of how the system of instruction goes on, and of the capacities of his officers.

After all exercises on the manœuvre-ground the commander himself should also, before his officers, and sometimes sergeants, and perhaps even his sub-section-leaders, criticise and give his opinion as to how the work has been done, and what faults committed and to be in future avoided. The criticism should never be dispensed with, and will increase the value of the work done tenfold. The officers will criticise what has been gone through, the sergeants will talk about it in their mess, and the men will "yarn" about it in their barrack-room, with the result that a certain amount of knowledge will be got into everyone's head.

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CHAPTER V.

SADDLERY AND EQUIPMENT.

There would be great advantage, if means could be found, to provide a lighter saddle for mounted infantry, but the difficulty to overcome is, to combine lightness with strength.

The present cavalry saddle is the best which the British Army has ever had, and if a smaller size than the mounted infantry size could be made for actual ponies, nothing better could be wished for.

It must be remembered that a soldier, if he is to remain efficient, has to put a great many things on to his saddle, and any attempt to lighten the saddle-tree generally results in it being strained when the great-coat or cloak, waterproof sheet, the nosebag full, the mess tin full, the bucket and rifle, the packed wallets, and, finally, the soldier, with, perhaps, 150 rounds of ammunition, is placed upon it.

Officers who join mounted infantry frequently grumble at the height of the cantle of a cavalry saddle, as it takes time to teach the recruit mounted infantryman to swing his right leg high when mounting, but if you are to carry a "rear-pack," *i.e.*, great-coat or cloak, waterproof sheet, and picket peg securely, and in such a position that it will not injure the horse, there must be the height which the cantle gives to keep it off the horse's back.

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This height becomes more valuable as the horse loses in condition and lets the saddle down nearer his back and back-bone.

It is of the last importance to get every ounce off the horse, and when rapid marching is required in some climates, it may be found possible to discard the "rear-pack," and carry the man's blanket under the saddle instead of the saddle blanket.

This change lightens the horse's load considerably (roughly by 7 or 8 lbs.), but both men and horses must be watched, or sick men and sore-backed horses will be the result. The men must never part with their jerseys.

In standing camps, or when troops are not marching, it should be remembered that in cold and severe weather a good blanket is worth per day to a horse at least a feed of corn, and helps to prevent him getting thin and weak. Horse blankets are luxuries which are very hard to get hold of, and still more difficult to carry, but make-shift coverings of bits of tarpauling, sacking, etc., are sometimes procurable, and can be devoted to certain horses which seem to be falling away.

Apropos of the weight carried by the horse, never allow your men *to remain mounted a minute longer than necessary*—while the man's weight is on the horse, the animal may be considered at work; while the soldier is dismounted the horse will rest and sleep. As the mounted infantryman is (unlike the cavalryman) more prepared against sudden attack dismounted, there is *no excuse*

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for his wearing out his horse by remaining mounted.

Men discovered sitting on their horses should always be checked, and it should be an ingrained habit to dismount on halting unless there is some good reason for remaining in the saddle.

The great importance of this rule is not enough realised or understood—at any rate, the rule is often not observed.

It must be remembered that besides allowing a horse to rest—when the weight of the man is removed from the horse's back, the pressure upon the small blood-vessels in the back is relieved, and those that may be getting crushed or bruised by the unequal pressure of a wrinkle in the blanket, or a badly fitting saddle, get a chance of resuming their functions, and a sore back is, perhaps, saved.

We were the last nation clinging to cruppers, and the great majority of our cavalry officers declared against them some years ago. Those who, however, supported the retention of cruppers, urged that it is not in peace time, when the horses are big and strong, when the well-filled-out and muscular shoulders keep the saddle in its place, that the crupper is required: it is when the troop-horse has, by privation or hard work, lost his fine rounded shape, and when his lowered crest and withers and thin bodypiece allow the saddle to glide forward, and the girth, hardened by exposure and wet, to grind away at the flesh behind the forearm and elbow. For mounted infantry, who may be

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mounted on under-bred and short-shouldered horses, cobs, ponies, and even mules, a crupper is often of immense service, and it would be well to allow to mounted infantry 15 per cent. of these articles.

In any special patterns of mounted infantry equipment, which may be adopted in the absence of Government equipment, there are two main points to be observed :—

(*a*) The rifle-bucket must always be placed behind the leg, so as to force the man to "draw arms" before dismounting ; otherwise it will occur that men will be disarmed, by dismounting without their rifles, and then getting separated by some accident from their horses.

(*b*) The article to carry the kit, whether wallets, saddle-bags, or what not, must just hold the kit and no more ; otherwise the soldier will "fill up" with private stores, and the horse will suffer.

(*c*) The regulation bridle can be lightened by reducing the weight of the bit, and by adopting a bit somewhat like that used by the German cavalry —what we should term an *unjointed* Pelham.

A bridoon should be retained, and on no account should a joint be permitted in the bit. A "Jointed Pelham" is neither bit nor snaffle ; the strain on the bridoon rein does away with the use of the curb, and the bit-rein brings a false bearing on the mouth. Were it certain that mounted infantry were to be always mounted on docile and spiritless animals, a simple bridoon would probably be

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sufficient; but it often happens they may be provided with horses requiring control, such as the fiery Arab or Syrian stallion, or the often spirited Cape horse. With such the bridoon and the bit, being separate, is invaluable.

The old link and T, or the strap-and-buckle bridoon, should be adopted.

The chain and spring-hook bridoon, now happily nearly obsolete, was an abominable contrivance for man and horse, and had not a single advantage to recommend it. But above all was it the pest of the mounted infantryman. When the bridoon rein was used to lead the horse, the strain of the rein drew the rings of the bridoon close together and pinched the horse's tongue, and caused him to stop short or to lead badly.

Arrangements for one man per sub-section to carry a spade, and one man per section to carry some pioneer's tool, should be made.

Regarding officers' equipment, it will be found an advantage if officers have their spurs, bit, bridoon irons, etc., nickelled; this adds greatly to the neatness of an officer's turn-out on service.

The whistle carried must be shrill and powerful if it is to make itself heard in action.

A second watch, on the wrist, should be worn by all officers, and is a great convenience for timing occurrences, as it only requires a downward glance of the eyes, and the continual drawing out and putting away of the watch is obviated. An officer is thus enabled to assure himself how

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time is moving without being noticed, and without giving, perhaps, the impression that he is anxious.

An officer should have his two regulation sets of saddlery complete in every detail. Mounted infantry officers are rather prone to break into patterns of Australian or colonial bridles. This is a great mistake. The cavalry bridle of the English army is the best extant in Europe, and only needs to have less metal in the bit. No second head-collar is required. You can unbit your horse without dismounting. If the throat-lash is broken, a wallet-strap will replace it. Altogether it is a thoroughly practical and workmanlike article.

On one of an officer's chargers should be carried, on the fans of the saddle, a strongly made water-proof coat *cut to fit*, with high collar—long enough to touch the ankles, and provided with leg-straps. On the other saddle carry the regulation cloak rolled in a waterproof sheet. In the near wallet of each saddle should be carried a small surcingle pad to use with the leather surcingle of the saddle when a horse-blanket can be provided.

On one of your chargers carry the regulation saddle-pockets or saddle-bags, but do not over-weight the charger you are actually riding.

In addition, it will be found most useful to have two *joined* waterproof saddle-bags, which can be thrown over the saddle of the horse you are *not* riding, or put on a pack animal if one is available, or put on a luggage-cart.

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Thus there are available two pairs of wallets, one pair of large waterproof saddle-bags, one pair of regulation saddle-bags.

If the space afforded by these articles is filled with judgment, a mounted infantry officer can make shift without seeing his heavy baggage for many days.

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CHAPTER VI.

EMPLOYMENT OF MACHINE GUNS WITH MOUNTED INFANTRY.

The galloping machine gun marks another step in advance in the development of modern warfare.

In the English service, up to 1899, we have been accustomed to its use generally as an auxiliary to the fire of infantry fighting in close formation against savage tribes.

Such will not be the use of the machine gun in European warfare or against a civilised foe.

The important place of the machine gun is with mounted infantry and cavalry.

In the mounted infantry, the organisation of machine guns is laid down to be by sections of two guns, and the proportion of machine guns to rifles is a fraction more than six to 1,000. There is to a battalion of four companies of mounted infantry (about 600 all ranks) four machine guns.*

It will be readily understood that a great deal must be practised, and a great deal learnt before the efficient handling of machine guns with mounted troops is arrived at.

It is not enough for machine guns to trot or gallop about after cavalry or mounted infantry, opening fire at rifle or carbine ranges.

*A wheeler should be added to the establishment of a corps of mounted infantry which possesses more than two machine guns.

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The tactical handling of the guns must be carefully studied and practised, besides the training of the teams, drivers, and gunners.

All the machine guns, intended for use with mounted troops, should have pole and not shaft draught.

Woolwich adhered firmly to shaft draught for many years, while the Indian Government and foreign armies declared uncompromisingly for the pole.

It may be conceded that the shaft system is far neater; that the wheelers are worked in nearer their load; that the grasp of the wheelers is more powerful downhill; that the driving is more exact, and that over rough ground (though this is not universally admitted) shafts have their advantage over the pole; and that turning and reversing is more easily accomplished.

There still remains, however, to the credit of the pole system, the advantage it gives at the most dangerous crisis a gun in motion can pass through: a wheeler brought down, killed or disabled!

There is no comparison of the time needed to extricate a dead or disabled horse, and to hook in a fresh one in pole-draught, with the time required for the same operation in shaft-draught.

All this is well known to Artillery officers, but not so well understood by officers of other arms, and it brings us to our point regarding pole-draught for machine guns.

Machine guns, in action, must be pushed boldly to the front, and will far oftener have to submit to

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Infantry fire than will Artillery guns; therefore casualties among the horses must be expected and provided for. The teams must be unhooked quickly, which cannot be done with shaft-draught and shaft harness.

As the machine-gun carriage has only two wheels, there should be a "leg" or support on hinges underneath the pole, to let down when the team is unhooked.

As the teams will be frequently changed, breast-straps, and not collars, should be employed.

In some countries, it may be necessary to have recourse to pack equipment for the machine guns; but the two-wheeled carriage will usually be the system adhered to, especially as there would always be plenty of extra horse-power available, in case of difficulty.

The S.A.A. carts should carry certain wheeler's tools and other equipment, as well as ammunition.

The rifles of the drivers should be strapped on the gun-carriage boxes and on the carts.

All the riding-horses should have breast-straps, so as to be able to hook in when required.

The saddles of the men on the gun-carriage boxes should remain on the hand horses, leathers crossed and irons strapped together by centre wallet strap, traces running under the surcingle and outside the girths.

There should be special instruction in driving, in order to teach men the first principles, and to give them confidence.

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A driving *manège* should be marked out, and a very few lessons will enable the guns to be taken on to parade. The necessity of always watching the traces to see both horses do their share of the work must be impressed on the drivers, and also of not jerking at the draught either starting or on the move.

If two pairs are hooked in, the lead driver must take care to give a fair sweep in all turns, so as not to upset or hamper the wheelers, and to keep his traces slack going downhill.

The wheel driver must learn to keep his distance from the leaders, to keep his horses well collected when the ground is falling, to drive exactly after the leaders, and to be ready for any sudden change of pace or direction.

Although no pains are to be spared in thoroughly training the gun detachments, on no account must the machine-gun organisation be permitted to become a *battery* apart from the remainder of the corps. As many men and horses as possible should be trained to the work. It may not be possible to teach all the men to drive, or to pass all the horses into the teams, but at least one man per sub-section should understand the working of the machine guns, and there should be at least four spare teams, with drivers, per gun ready trained.

Certain rules which govern the use of artillery are also more or less binding on machine guns; for instance, while in motion they are powerless, and therefore, once in a good position, should not be moved until the last moment.

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In the Attack the *rôle* of machine guns is an important one. They fill a gap between the most effective fire of the field gun, and the most effective fire of the rifle.

In practising the Attack, the sound tactical working of machine guns must be carefully watched. A good position, oblique to the general line of advance, should be, if possible, found, at effective range from the enemy's position. There the machine guns and the escort must take up position as early as possible, to assist the advance.

The great difficulty which always clogs the use of the machine gun firing S.A. ammunition at "extreme" ranges is, that it is so hard to discover whether the range has been obtained.

To this, the attention of the officers in charge must always be directed, so that lead may not be pumped away into space.

Sometimes a hint can be obtained from the Artillery—sometimes a machine gun throwing a shell can assist—sometimes sandy or dusty patches will throw up some signs of the bullets striking.

These aids, combined with the judicious use of range finder and telescope, are often all needed to throw light on the subject.

Without moving the guns too frequently, the officer in command should seize every chance, as the fighting line advances, of pushing his guns forward, and getting to close quarters to help the fighting line, moving a certain proportion of his guns forward under cover of the fire of the remainder.

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Risk of losing guns should not deter him remaining in action when his fire is doing execution and rendering service. It is better to lose guns honourably than to save them, when, by being in action a few minutes longer, success in another part of the field might have been assured, or a retreat covered.

Directly the position where he is to come into action is reached, the officer should see if he has not time and opportunity to improve it; ten minutes' spade work will do a great deal towards covering his guns and teams. He must not keep his escort close to the guns, or in too close a formation, and must remember to have patrols and scouts looking out for him on his flanks and rear.

If the Attack succeeds, the machine guns must reach the position almost simultaneously with the fighting line, so as to make good the success.

In all situations, mounted infantry must be especially careful not to be surprised by cavalry.

Mounted infantry caught mounted by good cavalry would probably be never heard of again; while mounted infantry on the look-out should be able to take care of itself against all comers and in all situations.

When in a defensive position, the officer commanding the machine guns should take care to make his fire as effective as possible, morally as well as physically. He should make note of any open spaces the attacking force has to cross, and

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get some idea of the range by sighting shots with one gun, while perhaps his other guns are actually employed on the enemy. Sudden and violent resumption of fire partakes of the nature of sudden attack or surprise, and is most discouraging to the enemy, who has been congratulating himself on the lull which has taken place, and has probably imagined he has silenced his adversary's guns. Thus, before an enemy has reached a spot where the commander of the machine guns intends to attack him, he should for a time cease fire, and get his guns carefully trained and ready for opening a sudden and rapid fire.

In manœuvres, and before coming into action, the position of the machine guns should be in rear of the mounted infantry companies on the least exposed flank.

In action, however, the machine gun must not be tied down tactically to the rifle.

It should be the aim of the officers commanding the machine guns to keep the gun-carriage boxes always full of ammunition. The ammunition carts should always, when practicable, be drawn upon for ammunition, and the gun-carriage boxes left untouched. One ammunition cart should, if possible, be drawn upon at a time, if this can be done without confusion or crowding. Directly an ammunition cart has been emptied, it should be despatched in search of an ammunition column to refill.

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CHAPTER VII.

MOUNTED INFANTRY IN AN ADVANCED-GUARD ACTION.

In order to bring home to us the probable use of mounted infantry in European warfare, let us suppose that the advance guard of an army corps, composed of, say, nine squadrons, two horse artillery batteries, one company engineers,* an ambulance detachment, and three battalions mounted infantry with their machine guns, have been brought up by an enemy's force, barring the route. The commander of the advance guard has made up his mind not to stop, as he knows the general is anxious to reach a certain position to his front, and he has also pretty certain information that there is nothing overwhelming in front of him. His batteries come into action on some high ground about 3,000 yards from the enemy's position; ten guns are directed against the enemy's artillery (his cavalry has been driven in), while two guns are firing on a body of the enemy's infantry, which is seen advancing to some ground some little distance, say half-a-mile, in front of his (the enemy's) main position. The officer commanding the advance guard orders the officer commanding the mounted infantry

* Carts or other means of transport being provided for dismounted men.

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to threaten the enemy's main position, detaching a company and machine gun section to accompany eight squadrons, which are to attempt a turning movement against the enemy's left flank.

The officer commanding mounted infantry has already been at work with his telescope, and has turned over in his mind what he had best do. He gets his commanding officers together, details the company and machine gun section to accompany the squadrons from the 3rd Battalion, telling the officer commanding to remind the company-leader that if the mounted infantry are used he must dismount every man and get the cavalry to hold his horses for him.

He then details the 1st Battalion Mounted Infantry for fighting line, supports, and reserves, and No. 2 Battalion as second line; pointing out the general line of attack, and the objects they are to advance upon. He details the 3rd Battalion to furnish a company as escort with the remaining machine guns, and two companies as third line.

About 900 yards in front of where his corps is now standing in column, more or less sheltered, appears to be a sharp dip in the ground, which looks as if it would give good shelter to his horses. This dip is pointed out, and the captains of the companies composing the fighting line and supports are directed to take the companies of the fighting line at a gallop and independently to this place, dismount, and commence the attack, leaving their horses (to be held subsequently by men detailed by

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the companies of the reserve) thus protected by the ground. Directly the fighting line has commenced its advance, the supports will, one after the other, cross the 900 yards to the dip at a gallop, and advance. In like manner, the reserve companies will be brought up, and will set free the horse-holders of the fighting line and supports, taking charge of the horses of the leading companies.

In the meantime, an advantageous position towards one of the flanks, and about 1,200 yards distance from the enemy's position, has been found for the machine guns, and the officer in command is directed to move them off by the most sheltered route he can find, and open fire, two guns on the infantry and two guns on the enemy's artillery, if he can make good enough practice against the gunners—using the rifles of his escort in the same way—endeavouring to cover the advance of the fighting line.

The above movements are well carried out.

After an hour the fighting-line is about 600 yards from the enemy's infantry, who has turned out to be stronger in that arm than was expected—the balance of the fire being only partially restored by the four machine guns and the fire of their escort. However, from the enemy's left flank, musketry and the crack of the machine guns are heard, and in a short time it is evident that the enemy's infantry is trying to disengage itself and withdraw.

We will not follow this hypothetical case further; enough has been said to give an idea of the way

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mounted infantry may be handled in an advanced-guard action. It may, however, be here pointed out what a different business this supposed skirmish would have been had infantry instead of mounted infantry been employed.

To begin with, this affair would have taken much more time—the attack would naturally have developed much more slowly, the cavalry of the vanguard would have had to wait patiently for the infantry to come up, the guns alone being able to trot forward, on the news being sent back to the main body of the advance guard that they were wanted. Great difference would also show itself afterwards.

After the combat, and when the commander of the advance guard would be anxious to push on again, the infantry would wish for a little time to get their breath and recover themselves; then, as the excitement died out, it would be found that a good deal had been taken out of them by the hurry up to the front, the deployment, and the action; and the resumption of the march would be, probably, a leg-weary and plodding affair.

Whereas, in the other case, where mounted infantry were employed, the action would commence with the mounted infantry being at hand, as they would have trotted up with the guns, and could go into action as soon as was considered advisable, and there would be no delay.

After the action, the companies in second line would move on at once, while the remainder, directly the losses had been ascertained and the

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wounded disposed of, would trot after the main body and regain their distance in front of the column, which would not have been checked.

The foregoing may be taken as an example of the employment of mounted infantry in the advance guard.

In a general action, a commander will not needlessly employ his mounted infantry if infantry is available, but will keep them in hand. He will reserve them, in order to reinforce, speedily, infantry which has succeeded in getting some slight footing in a weak point in the position attacked, relieving them with infantry as soon as practicable; or he will send them in pursuit with his cavalry, or to assist cavalry in a turning movement, real or feigned; or lastly, in case of a reverse, he will use them to assist him to disengage his infantry and to cover his withdrawal from the position.

Although mounted infantry provided with horses has generally been referred to in these pages, it should not be supposed that mounted infantry is limited to this animal.

Let it be assumed that the nucleus of the mounted infantry, organised and trained as such, is mounted on small horses; but in the theatre of war this force might be increased by infantry provided with whatever material for transport could be procured.

Thus, with a certain object in view, infantry might be attached to the mounted infantry of an army corps mounted on country carts, bullock-drays, donkeys, camels, or any other means by

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which men may be kept unfatigued and can be moved speedily.

For centuries there have been conflicting opinions as regards mounted infantry. "Opinions," says the classic Jomini, "will always be divided as to those amphibious animals called dragoons."

In this generation, foreign officers have been generally of opinion that mounted infantry are nearly as expensive as cavalry, and not nearly as efficient. It remains to be seen whether the South African War has not modified these views.

The general who possesses a strong body (in proportion to the force he commands) of quickly-moving infantry has, without doubt, an increased chance of being the stronger at the important point, at the critical moment.

During the South African War the capacity shewn by the Boer leaders for receiving their adversaries' flank attacks as frontal ones has been frequently shewn.

To quote Jomini once more, "It cannot," says he, "be denied, however, that great advantages might result to the general who could rapidly move up ten thousand men on horseback to a decisive point and bring them into action as infantry."

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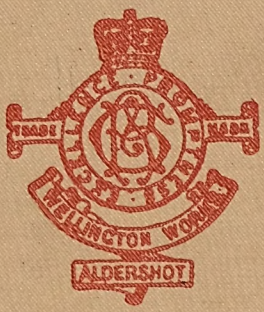

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